

Claims

I claim:

1. A power module, comprising:

an air compressor cell defining a variable-volume air compressor chamber, an air supply port, and an air exit port, said air supply port and air exit port each arranged in fluid communication with the air compressor chamber, said air supply port adapted to communicate with a source of supply air;

an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable air supply valve associated with the air supply port and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the air supply valve closes the air supply port and thereby closes fluid communication between the source of supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply port and ii) an opened position at which the air supply valve opens the air supply port and thereby opens fluid communication between the source of supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply port;

an air pump piston positioned in the air compressor chamber and operable to move between i) an expansion position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its minimum volume;

a combustion cell defining a variable-volume combustion chamber separate from the air compressor chamber, an air intake port, and an exhaust port, said air intake port and exhaust port each arranged in fluid communication with the combustion chamber;

an air storage chamber arranged in fluid communication between the air exit port of the air compressor cell and the air intake port of the combustion cell;

an intake valve associated with the air intake port of the combustion cell and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the intake valve closes the air intake port and thereby closes fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port and ii) an opened position at which the intake valve opens the air intake port and thereby opens fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port;

an exhaust valve associated with the exhaust port of the combustion cell and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the exhaust valve closes the exhaust port and thereby closes fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port and ii) an opened position at which the exhaust valve opens the exhaust port and thereby opens fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port; and

a power piston positioned in the combustion chamber and operable to move therein between i) an expansion position at which the combustion chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the combustion chamber reaches its minimum volume.

2. A power module, comprising:

an air compressor cell defining a variable-volume air compressor chamber, an air supply port, and an air exit port, said air supply port and air exit port each arranged in fluid communication with the air compressor chamber, said air supply port adapted to communicate with a source of supply air;

an air supply valve associated with the air supply port and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the air supply valve closes the air supply port and thereby closes fluid communication between the source of supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply port and ii) an opened position at which the air supply valve opens the air supply port and thereby opens fluid communication between the source of supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply port;

an air pump piston positioned in the air compressor chamber and operable to move between i) an expansion position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its minimum volume;

a combustion cell defining a variable-volume combustion chamber separate from the air compressor chamber, an air intake port, and an exhaust port, said air intake port and exhaust port each arranged in fluid communication with the combustion chamber;

21 an air storage chamber arranged in fluid communication between the air exit  
22 port of the air compressor cell and the air intake port of the combustion cell;

23 an intake valve associated with the air intake port of the combustion cell and  
24 selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the intake valve  
25 closes the air intake port and thereby closes fluid communication between the air  
26 storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port and ii) an  
27 opened position at which the intake valve opens the air intake port and thereby opens  
28 fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber  
29 via the air intake port;

30 an exhaust valve associated with the exhaust port of the combustion cell and  
31 selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the exhaust valve  
32 closes the exhaust port and thereby closes fluid communication between the  
33 combustion chamber and the exhaust port and ii) an opened position at which the  
34 exhaust valve opens the exhaust port and thereby opens fluid communication  
35 between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port; and

36 a power piston positioned in the combustion chamber and operable to move  
37 therein between i) an expansion position at which the combustion chamber reaches  
38 its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the combustion chamber  
39 reaches its minimum volume, further including an air check valve arranged in fluid  
40 communication between said air exit port of the air compressor cell and the air  
41 storage chamber, said air check valve operable to allow only one-way fluid flow  
42 from the air compressor chamber to the air storage chamber.

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1 3. A power module, comprising:

2 an air compressor cell defining a variable-volume air compressor chamber,  
3 an air supply port, and an air exit port, said air supply port and air exit port each  
4 arranged in fluid communication with the air compressor chamber, said air supply  
5 port adapted to communicate with a source of supply air;

6 an air supply valve associated with the air supply port and selectively  
7 operable to move between i) a closed position at which the air supply valve closes  
8 the air supply port and thereby closes fluid communication between the source of  
9 supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply port and ii) an opened

position at which the air supply valve opens the air supply port and thereby opens fluid communication between the source of supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply port;

an air pump piston positioned in the air compressor chamber and operable to move between i) an expansion position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its minimum volume;

a combustion cell defining a variable-volume combustion chamber separate from the air compressor chamber, an air intake port, and an exhaust port, said air intake port and exhaust port each arranged in fluid communication with the combustion chamber;

an air storage chamber arranged in fluid communication between the air exit port of the air compressor cell and the air intake port of the combustion cell;

an intake valve associated with the air intake port of the combustion cell and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the intake valve closes the air intake port and thereby closes fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port and ii) an opened position at which the intake valve opens the air intake port and thereby opens fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port;

an exhaust valve associated with the exhaust port of the combustion cell and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the exhaust valve closes the exhaust port and thereby closes fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port and ii) an opened position at which the exhaust valve opens the exhaust port and thereby opens fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port; and

a power piston positioned in the combustion chamber and operable to move therein between i) an expansion position at which the combustion chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the combustion chamber reaches its minimum volume, wherein said air supply valve is an electronically-controllable two-way valve including a movable magnetically-latchable poppet having an end portion, a return spring operable to bias the poppet towards one

42 position corresponding to the closed position of the air supply valve, and an  
43 opening-direction electrical coil located proximate the end portion of the poppet,  
44 said opening-direction electrical coil selectively operable to electromagnetically pull  
45 the poppet towards another position corresponding to the opened position of the air  
46 supply valve.

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1 4. The power module of claim 3, further including an electronic control  
2 unit operable to selectively and independently control the operation of the air supply  
3 valve with digital pulses of electrical current.

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1 5. The power module of claim 4, further including an air pressure sensor  
2 operable to sense the pressure of air in the air storage chamber and provide the  
3 electronic control unit with a signal indicative of such pressure, said electronic  
4 control unit operable to move the air supply valve to its opened position in response  
5 to said pressure being below a threshold air pressure, said electronic control unit  
6 operable to move the air supply valve to its closed position in response to said  
7 pressure being at least the threshold air pressure.

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1 6. (Twice Amended) The power module of claim 5, wherein the  
2 electronic control unit is operable to selectively and independently control the  
3 operation of the air supply valve in further response to at least one sensed parameter  
4 selected from the group of ambient air temperature, ambient barometric pressure,  
5 inlet air temperature, inlet air pressure, actuating fluid temperature, actuating fluid  
6 pressure, throttle position, power piston position, engine brake signals, starter inputs,  
7 and ignition switch position.

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1 7. The power module of claim 1, wherein the air compressor cell and  
2 the combustion cell are integrally formed adjacent one another by a common  
3 housing.

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1 8. A power module, comprising:

an air compressor cell defining a variable-volume air compressor chamber, an air supply port, and an air exit port, said air supply port and air exit port each arranged in fluid communication with the air compressor chamber, said air supply port adapted to communicate with a source of supply air;

an air supply valve associated with the air supply port and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the air supply valve closes the air supply port and thereby closes fluid communication between the source of supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply port and ii) an opened position at which the air supply valve opens the air supply port and thereby opens fluid communication between the source of supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply port;

an air pump piston positioned in the air compressor chamber and operable to move between i) an expansion position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its minimum volume;

a combustion cell defining a variable-volume combustion chamber separate from the air compressor chamber, an air intake port, and an exhaust port, said air intake port and exhaust port each arranged in fluid communication with the combustion chamber;

an air storage chamber arranged in fluid communication between the air exit port of the air compressor cell and the air intake port of the combustion cell;

an intake valve associated with the air intake port of the combustion cell and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the intake valve closes the air intake port and thereby closes fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port and ii) an opened position at which the intake valve opens the air intake port and thereby opens fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port;

an exhaust valve associated with the exhaust port of the combustion cell and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the exhaust valve closes the exhaust port and thereby closes fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port and ii) an opened position at which the

34 exhaust valve opens the exhaust port and thereby opens fluid communication  
35 between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port; and

36 a power piston positioned in the combustion chamber and operable to move  
37 therein between i) an expansion position at which the combustion chamber reaches  
38 its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the combustion chamber  
39 reaches its minimum volume, wherein the air pump piston and the power piston are  
40 movable by a common drive device.

41  
1 9. The power module of claim 8, wherein said common drive device  
2 includes a rotatable crankshaft.

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1 10. The power module of claim 1, further including a direct-injection fuel  
2 injector extending into the combustion chamber and selectively operable to inject  
3 fuel therein.

4  
1 11. (Twice Amended) A power module, comprising:  
2 a turbocharger including an exhaust gas inlet and a compressed air outlet;  
3 an air compressor cell defining a variable-volume air compressor chamber, a  
4 free air supply port adapted to communicate with atmosphere, at least one  
5 turbocharged air supply port arranged in fluid communication with the compressed  
6 air outlet of the turbocharger, and an air exit port, said free air supply port,  
7 turbocharged air supply port, and air exit port each arranged in separate fluid  
8 communication with the air compressor chamber;

9 an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable free air supply valve  
10 associated with the free air supply port and selectively operable to move between i) a  
11 closed position at which the free air supply valve closes the free air supply port and  
12 thereby closes fluid communication between atmosphere and the air compressor  
13 chamber via the free air supply port and ii) an opened position at which the free air  
14 supply valve opens the free air supply port and thereby opens fluid communication  
15 between atmosphere and the air compressor chamber via the free air supply port;

16 an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable turbocharged air supply  
17 valve associated with each turbocharged air supply port and selectively operable to

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18 move between i) a closed position at which the turbocharged air supply valve closes  
19 its respective turbocharged air supply port and thereby closes fluid communication  
20 between the compressed air outlet of the turbocharger and the air compressor  
21 chamber via the respective turbocharged air supply port and ii) an opened position at  
22 which the turbocharged air supply valve opens its respective turbocharged air supply  
23 port and thereby opens fluid communication between the compressed air outlet of  
24 the turbocharger and the air compressor chamber via the respective turbocharged air  
25 supply port;

26 an air pump piston positioned in the air compressor chamber and operable to  
27 move between i) an expansion position at which the air compressor chamber reaches  
28 its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the air compressor  
29 chamber reaches its minimum volume;

30 a combustion cell defining a variable-volume combustion chamber separate  
31 from the air compressor chamber, an air intake port, a free exhaust port adapted to  
32 communicate with atmosphere, and at least one drive exhaust port arranged in fluid  
33 communication with the exhaust gas inlet of the turbocharger, said air intake port,  
34 free exhaust port, and drive exhaust port each arranged in separate fluid  
35 communication with the combustion chamber;

36 an air storage chamber arranged in fluid communication between the air exit  
37 port of the air compressor cell and the air intake port of the combustion cell;

38 an intake valve associated with the air intake port of the combustion cell and  
39 selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the intake valve  
40 closes the air intake port and thereby closes fluid communication between the air  
41 storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port and ii) an  
42 opened position at which the intake valve opens the air intake port and thereby opens  
43 fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber  
44 via the air intake port;

45 a free exhaust valve associated with the free exhaust port of the combustion  
46 cell and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the free  
47 exhaust valve closes the free exhaust port and thereby closes fluid communication  
48 between the combustion chamber and atmosphere via the free exhaust port and ii) an  
49 opened position at which the free exhaust valve opens the free exhaust port and



50 thereby opens fluid communication between the combustion chamber and  
51 atmosphere via the free exhaust port;

52 a drive exhaust valve associated with each drive exhaust port of the  
53 combustion cell and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at  
54 which the drive exhaust valve closes its respective drive exhaust port and thereby  
55 closes fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust gas  
56 inlet of the turbocharger via the respective drive exhaust port and ii) an opened  
57 position at which the drive exhaust valve opens its respective drive exhaust port and  
58 thereby opens fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the  
59 exhaust gas inlet of the turbocharger via the respective drive exhaust port; and

60 a power piston positioned in the combustion chamber and operable to move  
61 therein between i) an expansion position at which the combustion chamber reaches  
62 its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the combustion chamber  
63 reaches its minimum volume.

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1 12. A power module, comprising:

2 an actuating fluid compressor cell defining a variable-volume actuating fluid  
3 compressor chamber and an actuating fluid port arranged in fluid communication  
4 with the actuating fluid compressor chamber, said actuating fluid port adapted to  
5 communicate with a source of actuating fluid;

6 an actuating fluid drain passage;

7 an actuating fluid supply valve arranged in fluid communication between the  
8 source of actuating fluid and the actuating fluid port and selectively operable to  
9 move between i) a closed position at which the supply valve closes fluid  
10 communication between the source of actuating fluid and the actuating fluid  
11 compressor chamber via the actuating fluid port and ii) an opened position at which  
12 the supply valve opens fluid communication between the source of actuating fluid  
13 and the actuating fluid compressor chamber via the actuating fluid port;

14 an actuating fluid pump piston positioned in the actuating fluid compressor  
15 chamber and operable to move therein between i) an expansion position at which  
16 the actuating fluid compressor chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a

17 contraction position at which the actuating fluid compressor chamber reaches its  
18 minimum volume;

19 a combustion cell defining a variable-volume combustion chamber, separate  
20 from the actuating fluid compressor chamber, an air intake port, an exhaust port, and  
21 an actuating fluid common rail, said air intake port and exhaust port each arranged in  
22 fluid communication with the combustion chamber;

23 an actuating fluid storage chamber arranged in fluid communication between  
24 the actuating fluid port of the actuating fluid compressor cell and the actuating fluid  
25 common rail;

26 a hydraulically-actuatable intake valve associated with the air intake port of  
27 the combustion cell and having an actuating fluid chamber and a piston portion  
28 positioned in the actuating fluid chamber, said intake valve selectively operable to  
29 move between i) a closed position at which the intake valve closes the air intake port  
30 and thereby closes fluid communication to the combustion chamber via the air intake  
31 port and ii) an opened position at which the intake valve opens the air intake port  
32 and thereby opens fluid communication to the combustion chamber via the air intake  
33 port;

34 an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable first control valve  
35 arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the  
36 actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve, said first control valve selectively  
37 operable to move between i) a closed position at which the first control valve closes  
38 fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid  
39 chamber of the intake valve and opens fluid communication between the actuating  
40 fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve thereby  
41 allowing the intake valve to be moved towards its closed position and ii) an opened  
42 position at which the first control valve opens fluid communication between the  
43 actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve and  
44 closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the  
45 actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve thereby allowing the intake valve to be  
46 hydraulically moved towards its opened position ;

47 a hydraulically-actuatable exhaust valve associated with the exhaust port of  
48 the combustion cell and having an actuating fluid chamber and a piston portion

49 positioned in the actuating fluid chamber, said exhaust valve selectively operable to  
50 move between i) a closed position at which the exhaust valve closes the exhaust port  
51 and thereby closes fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the  
52 exhaust port and ii) an opened position at which the exhaust valve opens the exhaust  
53 port and thereby opens fluid communication between the combustion chamber and  
54 the exhaust port;

55 an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable second control valve  
56 arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the  
57 actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve, said second control valve selectively  
58 operable to move between i) a closed position at which the second control valve  
59 closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the  
60 actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve and opens fluid communication  
61 between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the  
62 exhaust valve thereby allowing the exhaust valve to be moved towards its closed  
63 position and ii) an opened position at which the second control valve opens fluid  
64 communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid  
65 chamber of the exhaust valve and closes fluid communication between the actuating  
66 fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve thereby  
67 allowing the exhaust valve to be hydraulically moved towards its opened position;  
68 and

69 a power piston positioned in the combustion chamber and operable to move  
70 therein between i) an expansion position at which the combustion chamber reaches  
71 its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the combustion chamber  
72 reaches its minimum volume.

73  
1 13. The power module of claim 12, further including a check valve  
2 arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid port of the actuating  
3 fluid compressor cell and the actuating fluid storage chamber, said check valve  
4 operable to allow only one-way fluid flow from the actuating fluid compressor  
5 chamber to the actuating fluid storage chamber.

6  
1 14. The power module of claim 12, wherein said actuating fluid supply

2 valve includes a digitally-controlled two-way valve including a movable  
3 magnetically-latchable spool having one end portion and an opposite end portion, a  
4 closing-direction electrical coil located proximate the one end portion of the spool,  
5 and an opening-direction electrical coil located proximate the opposite end portion  
6 of the spool, said closing-direction electrical coil selectively operable to  
7 electromagnetically pull the spool towards one state corresponding to the closed  
8 position of the actuating fluid supply valve, said opening-direction electrical coil  
9 selectively operable to electromagnetically pull the spool towards another state  
10 corresponding to the opened position of the actuating fluid supply valve.  
11

1 15. (Amended) The power module of claim 12, wherein said first and  
2 second control valves each include a digitally-controlled three-way valve including  
3 a movable magnetically-latchable spool having one end portion and an opposite end  
4 portion, a closing-direction electrical coil located proximate the one end portion of  
5 the spool, and an opening-direction electrical coil located proximate the opposite end  
6 portion of the spool, said closing-direction electrical coil selectively operable to  
7 electromagnetically pull the spool towards one state corresponding to the closed  
8 position of the respective control valve, said opening-direction electrical coil  
9 selectively operable to electromagnetically pull the spool towards another state  
10 corresponding to the opened position of the respective control valve.  
11

1 16. The power module of claim 12, further including an electronic control  
2 unit operable to control the selectable operation of each said electronically-  
3 controllable valves.  
4

1 17. The power module of claim 16, further including an actuating fluid  
2 pressure sensor operable to i) sense the pressure of actuating fluid in the actuating  
3 fluid storage chamber and ii) provide the electronic control unit with an actuating  
4 fluid pressure signal indicative of said pressure, said electronic control unit operable  
5 to independently control the operation of the actuating fluid supply valve in response  
6 to said actuating fluid pressure signal.  
7

1           18.    The power module of claim 16, further including an actuating fluid  
2           pressure sensor operable to i) sense the pressure of actuating fluid in the actuating  
3           fluid common rail and ii) provide the electronic control unit with an actuating fluid  
4           pressure signal indicative of said pressure, said electronic control unit operable to  
5           independently control the operation of the first and second control valves in response  
6           to said actuating fluid pressure signal.

1           19.    The power module of claim 16, wherein said electronic control unit  
2           further independently controls the operation of the first and second control valves in  
3           response to at least one sensed parameter selected from the group of ambient air  
4           temperature, ambient barometric pressure, inlet air temperature, inlet air pressure,  
5           actuating fluid temperature, actuating fluid pressure, throttle position, power piston  
6           position, engine brake signals, starter inputs, and ignition switch position.

1           20.    The power module of claim 12, further including an  
2           electronically-controllable hydraulically-actuatable fuel injector extending into the  
3           combustion chamber and selectively operable to inject fuel therein.

1           21.    The power module of claim 20, wherein said injector includes an  
2           actuating fluid chamber, a piston portion positioned in the actuating fluid chamber, a  
3           check valve movable between a closed position at which the check valve blocks  
4           injection of fuel and an opened position at which the check valve opens injection of  
5           fuel, and an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable third control valve  
6           arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the  
7           actuating fluid chamber of the injector, said third control valve selectively operable  
8           to move between i) a closed position at which the third control valve closes fluid  
9           communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid  
10          chamber of the injector and opens fluid communication between the actuating fluid  
11          drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the injector thereby allowing the  
12          check valve of the injector to be moved towards its closed position and ii) an opened  
13          position at which the third control valve opens fluid communication between the  
14          actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the injector and

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15 closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the  
16 actuating fluid chamber of the injector thereby allowing the check valve to be  
17 hydraulically moved towards its opened position.  
18

1 22. The power module of claim 21, wherein said injector is a multiple  
2 stage injector.  
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1 23. The power module of claim 12, wherein said actuating fluid storage  
2 chamber is integrally formed with the actuating fluid compressor cell.  
3

1 24. The power module of claim 12, wherein said actuating fluid storage  
2 chamber is connected to the actuating fluid compressor cell.  
3

1 25. The power module of claim 12, wherein said intake and exhaust  
2 valves each further include a return spring operable to bias the respective valve  
3 towards its closed position.  
4

1 26. The power module of claim 12, wherein the actuating fluid  
2 compressor cell and the combustion cell are integrally formed with one another by a  
3 common housing.  
4

1 27. The power module of claim 12, wherein the actuating fluid  
2 compressor cell and the combustion cell are connected together as a compact unit.  
3

1 28. The power module of claim 12, wherein the actuating fluid pump  
2 piston and the power piston are movable by a common drive device.  
3

1 29. (Twice Amended) A power module, comprising:  
2 an air compressor cell defining a variable-volume air compressor chamber,  
3 an air supply port, and an air exit port, said air supply port and air exit port each  
4 arranged in fluid communication with the air compressor chamber, said air supply  
5 port adapted to communicate with a source of supply air;

an air supply valve associated with the air supply port and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the air supply valve closes the air supply port and thereby closes fluid communication between the source of supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply port and ii) an opened position at which the air supply valve opens the air supply port and thereby opens fluid communication between the source of supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply port;

an air pump piston positioned in the air compressor chamber and operable to move between i) an expansion position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its minimum volume;

a combustion cell defining a variable-volume combustion chamber, separate from the actuating fluid compressor chamber, an air intake port, an exhaust port, and an actuating fluid common rail, said air intake port and exhaust port each arranged in fluid communication with the combustion chamber;

an air storage chamber arranged in fluid communication between the air exit port of the air compressor cell and the air intake port of the combustion cell;

an air check valve arranged in fluid communication between said air exit port and the air storage chamber, said air check valve operable to allow only one-way fluid flow from the air compressor chamber to the air storage chamber;

an actuating fluid compressor cell defining a variable-volume actuating fluid compressor chamber and an actuating fluid port arranged in fluid communication with the actuating fluid compressor chamber, said actuating fluid port adapted to communicate with a source of actuating fluid;

an actuating fluid drain passage;

an actuating fluid supply valve arranged in fluid communication between the source of actuating fluid and the actuating fluid port and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the actuating fluid supply valve closes fluid communication between the source of actuating fluid and the actuating fluid compressor chamber via the actuating fluid port and ii) an opened position at which the actuating fluid supply valve opens fluid communication between the source of

actuating fluid and the actuating fluid compressor chamber via the actuating fluid port;

an actuating fluid pump piston positioned in the actuating fluid compressor chamber and operable to move therein between i) an expansion position at which the actuating fluid compressor chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the actuating fluid compressor chamber reaches its minimum volume;

an actuating fluid storage chamber arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid port of the actuating fluid compressor cell and the actuating fluid common rail;

an actuating fluid check valve arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid port of the actuating fluid compressor cell and the actuating fluid storage chamber, said actuating fluid check valve operable to allow only one-way fluid flow from the actuating fluid compressor chamber to the actuating fluid storage chamber;

a hydraulically-actuatable intake valve associated with the air intake port of the combustion cell and having an actuating fluid chamber and a piston portion positioned in the actuating fluid chamber, said intake valve selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the intake valve closes the air intake port and thereby closes fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port and ii) an opened position at which the intake valve opens the air intake port and thereby opens fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port;

an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable first control valve arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve, said first control valve selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the first control valve closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve and opens fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve thereby allowing the intake valve to be moved towards its closed position and ii) an opened position at which the first control valve opens fluid communication between the



actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve and closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve thereby allowing the intake valve to be hydraulically moved towards its opened position ;

a hydraulically-actuatable exhaust valve associated with the exhaust port of the combustion cell and having an actuating fluid chamber and a piston portion positioned in the actuating fluid chamber, said exhaust valve selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the exhaust valve closes the exhaust port and thereby closes fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port and ii) an opened position at which the exhaust valve opens the exhaust port and thereby opens fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port;

an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable second control valve arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve, said second control valve selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the second control valve closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve and opens fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve thereby allowing the exhaust valve to be moved towards its closed position and ii) an opened position at which the second control valve opens fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve and closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve thereby allowing the exhaust valve to be hydraulically moved towards its opened position; and

a power piston positioned in the combustion chamber and operable to move therein between i) an expansion position at which the combustion chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the combustion chamber reaches its minimum volume.

1           30.    The power module of claim 29, wherein said actuating fluid pump  
2 piston is driven by said air pump piston.  
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1           31.    A power module, comprising:  
2            an air compressor cell defining a variable-volume air compressor chamber,  
3            an air supply port, and an air exit port, said air supply port and air exit port each  
4            arranged in separate fluid communication with the air compressor chamber, said air  
5            supply port adapted to communicate with a source of supply air;  
6            an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable air supply poppet valve  
7            associated with the air supply port, said air supply poppet valve including a  
8            magnetically-latchable poppet having an end portion and movable between a closed  
9            position and an opened position, a return spring operable to bias the poppet of the air  
10           supply poppet valve towards its closed position at which the poppet of the air supply  
11           poppet valve closes the air supply port and thereby closes fluid communication  
12           between the source of supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply  
13           port, and an opening-direction electrical coil located proximate the end portion of the  
14           poppet, said opening-direction electrical coil selectively operable to  
15           electromagnetically pull the poppet of the air supply poppet valve towards its opened  
16           position at which the poppet of the air supply poppet valve opens the air supply port  
17           and thereby opens fluid communication between the source of supply air and the air  
18           compressor chamber via the air supply port;  
19            an air pump piston positioned in the air compressor chamber and operable to  
20           reciprocally move between i) an expansion position at which the air compressor  
21           chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the air  
22           compressor chamber reaches its minimum volume;  
23            a combustion cell defining a variable-volume internal combustion chamber,  
24            separate from the actuating fluid compressor chamber, an air intake port, an exhaust  
25            port, and an actuating fluid common rail, said air intake port and exhaust port each  
26            arranged in separate fluid communication with the combustion chamber;  
27            an air storage chamber arranged in fluid communication between the air exit  
28           port of the air compressor cell and the air intake port of the combustion cell;

an air check valve arranged in fluid communication between said air exit port and the air storage chamber, said air check valve operable to allow only one-way fluid flow from the air compressor chamber to the air storage chamber;

an actuating fluid compressor cell defining a variable-volume actuating fluid compressor chamber and an actuating fluid port arranged in fluid communication with the actuating fluid compressor chamber, said actuating fluid port adapted to communicate with a source of actuating fluid;

an actuating fluid drain passage;

an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable two-way actuating fluid supply valve arranged in fluid communication between the source of actuating fluid and the actuating fluid port, said actuating fluid supply valve including a magnetically-latchable spool having one end portion and an opposite end portion and movable between a closed position and an opened position, a closing-direction electrical coil located proximate the one end portion of the spool, and an opening-direction electrical coil located proximate the opposite end portion of the spool, said closing-direction electrical coil selectively operable to electromagnetically pull the spool of the actuating fluid supply valve towards its closed position at which the spool of the actuating fluid supply valve closes fluid communication between the source of actuating fluid and the actuating fluid compressor chamber via the actuating fluid port, said opening-direction electrical coil selectively operable to electromagnetically pull the spool of the actuating fluid supply valve towards its opened position at which the spool of the actuating fluid supply valve opens fluid communication between the source of actuating fluid and the actuating fluid compressor chamber via the actuating fluid port;

an actuating fluid pump piston positioned in the actuating fluid compressor chamber and operable to reciprocally move therein between i) an expansion position at which the actuating fluid compressor chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the actuating fluid compressor chamber reaches its minimum volume;

an actuating fluid storage chamber arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid port of the actuating fluid compressor cell and the actuating fluid common rail;

an actuating fluid check valve arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid port of the actuating fluid compressor cell and the actuating fluid storage chamber, said actuating fluid check valve operable to allow only one-way fluid flow from the actuating fluid compressor chamber to the actuating fluid storage chamber;

a hydraulically-actuatable intake poppet valve associated with the air intake port of the combustion cell and having an actuating fluid chamber and a piston portion positioned in the actuating fluid chamber, said intake poppet valve selectively operable to reciprocally move between i) a closed position at which the intake poppet valve closes the air intake port and thereby closes fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port and ii) an opened position at which the intake poppet valve opens the air intake port and thereby opens fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port;

an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable three-way first control valve arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve, said first control valve including a magnetically-latchable spool having one end portion and an opposite end portion and movable between a closed position and an opened position, a closing-direction electrical coil located proximate the one end portion of the spool, and an opening-direction electrical coil located proximate the opposite end portion of the spool, said closing-direction electrical coil selectively operable to electromagnetically pull the spool towards its closed position at which the spool of the first control valve closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake poppet valve and opens fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake poppet valve thereby allowing the intake poppet valve to be moved towards its closed position, said opening-direction electrical coil selectively operable to electromagnetically pull the spool towards its opened position at which the spool of the first control valve opens fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake poppet valve and closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating

fluid chamber of the intake poppet valve thereby allowing the intake poppet valve to be hydraulically moved towards its opened position;

a hydraulically-actuatable exhaust poppet valve associated with the exhaust port of the combustion cell and having an actuating fluid chamber and a piston portion positioned in the actuating fluid chamber, said exhaust poppet valve selectively operable to reciprocally move between i) a closed position at which the exhaust poppet valve closes the exhaust port and thereby closes fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port and ii) an opened position at which the exhaust poppet valve opens the exhaust port and thereby opens fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port;

an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable three-way second control valve arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust poppet valve, said second control valve including a magnetically-latchable spool having one end portion and an opposite end portion and movable between a closed position and an opened position, a closing-direction electrical coil located proximate the one end portion of the spool, and an opening-direction electrical coil located proximate the opposite end portion of the spool, said closing-direction electrical coil selectively operable to electromagnetically pull the spool towards its closed position at which the spool of the second control valve closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust poppet valve and opens fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust poppet valve thereby allowing the exhaust poppet valve to be moved towards its closed position, said opening-direction electrical coil selectively operable to electromagnetically pull the spool towards its opened position at which the spool of the second control valve opens fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust poppet valve and closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust poppet valve thereby allowing the exhaust poppet valve to be hydraulically moved towards its opened position; and

124 a power piston positioned in the combustion chamber and operable to  
125 reciprocally move therein between i) an expansion position at which the combustion  
126 chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the  
127 combustion chamber reaches its minimum volume.

128  
1 32. An internal combustion engine, comprising:

2 a plurality of power modules connected to generate work together wherein  
3 each power module separately includes an air compressor cell defining a variable-  
4 volume air compressor chamber, an air supply port, and an air exit port, said air  
5 supply port and air exit port each arranged in fluid communication with the air  
6 compressor chamber, said air supply port adapted to communicate with a source of  
7 supply air; an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable air supply valve  
8 associated with the air supply port and selectively operable to move between i) a  
9 closed position at which the air supply valve closes the air supply port and thereby  
10 closes fluid communication between the source of supply air and the air compressor  
11 chamber via the air supply port and ii) an opened position at which the air supply  
12 valve opens the air supply port and thereby opens fluid communication between the  
13 source of supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply port; an air  
14 pump piston positioned in the air compressor chamber and operable to move  
15 between i) an expansion position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its  
16 maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the air compressor chamber  
17 reaches its minimum volume; a combustion cell defining a variable-volume  
18 combustion chamber separate from the air compressor chamber, an air intake port,  
19 an exhaust port, and an actuating fluid common rail adapted to be arranged in fluid  
20 communication with a source of pressurized actuating fluid, said air intake port and  
21 exhaust port each arranged in fluid communication with the combustion chamber; an  
22 actuating fluid drain passage; an air storage chamber arranged in fluid  
23 communication between the air exit port of the air compressor cell and the air intake  
24 port of the combustion cell; a hydraulically-actuatable intake valve associated with  
25 the air intake port of the combustion cell and having an actuating fluid chamber and  
26 a piston portion positioned in the acting fluid chamber, said intake valve selectively  
27 operable to move between i) a closed position at which the intake valve closes the air

28 intake port and thereby closes fluid communication between the air storage chamber  
29 and the combustion chamber via the air intake port and ii) an opened position at  
30 which the intake valve opens the air intake port and thereby opens fluid  
31 communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via  
32 the air intake port; an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable first control  
33 valve arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and  
34 the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve, said first control valve selectively  
35 operable to move between i) a closed position at which the first control valve closes  
36 fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid  
37 chamber of the intake valve and opens fluid communication between the actuating  
38 fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve thereby  
39 allowing the intake valve to be moved towards its closed position and ii) an opened  
40 position at which the first control valve opens fluid communication between the  
41 actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve and  
42 closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the  
43 actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve thereby allowing the intake valve to be  
44 hydraulically moved towards its opened position; a hydraulically-actuatable exhaust  
45 valve associated with the exhaust port of the combustion cell and having an  
46 actuating fluid chamber and a piston portion positioned in the actuating fluid  
47 chamber, said exhaust valve selectively operable to move between i) a closed  
48 position at which the exhaust valve closes the exhaust port and thereby closes fluid  
49 communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port and ii) an  
50 opened position at which the exhaust valve opens the exhaust port and thereby opens  
51 fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port; an  
52 electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable second control valve arranged in  
53 fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid  
54 chamber of the exhaust valve, said second control valve selectively operable to move  
55 between i) a closed position at which the second control valve closes fluid  
56 communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid  
57 chamber of the exhaust valve and opens fluid communication between the actuating  
58 fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve thereby  
59 allowing the exhaust valve to be moved towards its closed position and ii) an opened

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position at which the second control valve opens fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve and closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve thereby allowing the exhaust valve to be hydraulically moved towards its opened position; and a power piston positioned in the respective combustion chamber and operable to move therein between i) an expansion position at which the respective combustion chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the respective combustion chamber reaches its minimum volume; wherein said air compressor chamber and air storage chamber of each power module are isolated from fluid communication and independently operable with respect to the air compressor chamber and air storage chamber of any other said power module of the internal combustion engine.

33. An internal combustion engine, comprising:

a plurality of power modules connected to generate work together wherein each power module separately includes an air compressor cell defining a variable-volume air compressor chamber, an air supply port, and an air exit port, said air supply port and air exit port each arranged in fluid communication with the air compressor chamber, said air supply port adapted to communicate with a source of supply air; an air supply valve associated with the air supply port and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the air supply valve closes the air supply port and thereby closes fluid communication between the source of supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply port and ii) an opened position at which the air supply valve opens the air supply port and thereby opens fluid communication between the source of supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply port; an air pump piston positioned in the air compressor chamber and operable to move between i) an expansion position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its minimum volume; a combustion cell defining a variable-volume combustion chamber separate from the air compressor chamber, an air intake port, and an exhaust port, said air intake port and exhaust port each arranged in fluid communication with the combustion chamber; an air storage



chamber arranged in fluid communication between the air exit port of the air compressor cell and the air intake port of the combustion cell; an intake valve associated with the air intake port of the combustion cell and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the intake valve closes the air intake port and thereby closes fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port and ii) an opened position at which the intake valve opens the air intake port and thereby opens fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port; an exhaust valve associated with the exhaust port of the combustion cell and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the exhaust valve closes the exhaust port and thereby closes fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port and ii) an opened position at which the exhaust valve opens the exhaust port and thereby opens fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port; and a power piston positioned in the respective combustion chamber and operable to move therein between i) an expansion position at which the respective combustion chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the respective combustion chamber reaches its minimum volume; wherein said air compressor chamber and air storage chamber of each power module are isolated from fluid communication and independently operable with respect to the air compressor chamber and air storage chamber of any other said power module of the internal combustion engine, further including a separate electronic control unit associated with each power module, each electronic control unit operable to selectively and independently control the operation of the respective air supply valve with digital pulses of electrical current.

34. The internal combustion engine of claim 33, further including an air pressure sensor associated with each power module, said air pressure sensor operable to sense the pressure of air in the respective air storage chamber and provide the respective electronic control unit with a signal indicative of such pressure, said respective electronic control unit operable to move the respective air supply valve to its opened position in response to said pressure being below a threshold air pressure,

said respective electronic control unit operable to move the respective air supply valve to its closed position in response to said pressure being at least the threshold air pressure.

35. (Twice Amended) An internal combustion engine, comprising:  
a plurality of power modules connected to generate work together wherein each power module separately includes an air compressor cell defining a variable-volume air compressor chamber, an air supply port, and an air exit port, said air supply port and air exit port each arranged in fluid communication with the air compressor chamber, said air supply port adapted to communicate with a source of supply air; an air supply valve associated with the air supply port and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the air supply valve closes the air supply port and thereby closes fluid communication between the source of supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply port and ii) an opened position at which the air supply valve opens the air supply port and thereby opens fluid communication between the source of supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply port; an air pump piston positioned in the air compressor chamber and operable to move between i) an expansion position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its minimum volume; a combustion cell defining a variable-volume combustion chamber separate from the air compressor chamber, an air intake port, and an exhaust port, said air intake port and exhaust port each arranged in fluid communication with the combustion chamber; an air storage chamber arranged in fluid communication between the air exit port of the air compressor cell and the air intake port of the combustion cell; an intake valve associated with the air intake port of the combustion cell and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the intake valve closes the air intake port and thereby closes fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port and ii) an opened position at which the intake valve opens the air intake port and thereby opens fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port; an exhaust valve associated with the exhaust port of the combustion cell and

selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the exhaust valve closes the exhaust port and thereby closes fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port and ii) an opened position at which the exhaust valve opens the exhaust port and thereby opens fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port; and a power piston positioned in the respective combustion chamber and operable to move therein between i) an expansion position at which the respective combustion chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the respective combustion chamber reaches its minimum volume; wherein said air compressor chamber and air storage chamber of each power module are isolated from fluid communication and independently operable with respect to the air compressor chamber and air storage chamber of any other said power module of the internal combustion engine, further including a separate electronic control unit associated with each power module wherein each electronic control unit is operable to selectively and independently control the operation of the respective air supply valve in response to at least one sensed parameter selected from the group of air temperature, air manifold pressure, actuating fluid temperature, actuating fluid pressure, barometric pressure, throttle position, power piston position, engine brake signals, starter inputs, and ignition switch position.

36. The internal combustion engine of claim 32, wherein the air compressor cell and combustion cell of each power module are located adjacent to one another.

37. The internal combustion engine of claim 32, wherein said power modules are arranged substantially in-line relative to one another.

38. The internal combustion engine of claim 32, wherein the air compressor cells are arranged in an alternating and substantially in-line pattern with respect to the combustion cells.

39. (Twice Amended) An internal combustion engine, comprising:

2 a plurality of power modules connected to generate work together wherein each  
3 power module separately includes an actuating fluid compressor cell defining a  
4 variable-volume actuating fluid compressor chamber and an actuating fluid port  
5 arranged in fluid communication with the actuating fluid compressor chamber, said  
6 actuating fluid port adapted to communicate with a source of actuating fluid; an  
7 actuating fluid drain passage; an actuating fluid supply valve arranged in fluid  
8 communication between the source of actuating fluid and the actuating fluid port and  
9 selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the actuating fluid  
10 supply valve closes fluid communication between the source of actuating fluid and  
11 the actuating fluid compressor chamber via the actuating fluid port and ii) an opened  
12 position at which the actuating fluid supply valve opens fluid communication  
13 between the source of actuating fluid and the actuating fluid compressor chamber via  
14 the actuating fluid port; an actuating fluid pump piston positioned in the actuating  
15 fluid compressor chamber and operable to move therein between i) an expansion  
16 position at which the actuating fluid compressor chamber reaches its maximum  
17 volume and ii) a contraction position at which the actuating fluid compressor  
18 chamber reaches its minimum volume; a combustion cell defining a variable-volume  
19 combustion chamber, separate from the actuating fluid compressor chamber, an air  
20 intake port, an exhaust port, and an actuating fluid common rail, said air intake port  
21 and exhaust port each arranged in fluid communication with the combustion  
22 chamber; an actuating fluid storage chamber arranged in fluid communication  
23 between the actuating fluid port of the actuating fluid compressor cell and the  
24 actuating fluid common rail; a hydraulically-actuatable intake valve associated with  
25 the air intake port of the combustion cell and having an actuating fluid chamber and  
26 a piston portion positioned in the actuating fluid chamber, said intake valve  
27 selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the intake valve  
28 closes the air intake port and thereby closes fluid communication between the air  
29 storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port and ii) an  
30 opened position at which the intake valve opens the air intake port and thereby opens  
31 fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber  
32 via the air intake port; an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable first  
33 control valve arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid common

34 rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve, said first control valve  
35 selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the first control  
36 valve closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the  
37 actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve and opens fluid communication between  
38 the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve  
39 thereby allowing the intake valve to be moved towards its closed position and ii) an  
40 opened position at which the first control valve opens fluid communication between  
41 the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve  
42 and closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the  
43 actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve thereby allowing the intake valve to be  
44 hydraulically moved towards its opened position; a hydraulically-actuatable exhaust  
45 valve associated with the exhaust port of the combustion cell and having an  
46 actuating fluid chamber and a piston portion positioned in the actuating fluid  
47 chamber, said exhaust valve selectively operable to move between i) a closed  
48 position at which the exhaust valve closes the exhaust port and thereby closes fluid  
49 communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port and ii) an  
50 opened position at which the exhaust valve opens the exhaust port and thereby opens  
51 fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port; an  
52 electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable second control valve arranged in  
53 fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid  
54 chamber of the exhaust valve, said second control valve selectively operable to move  
55 between i) a closed position at which the second control valve closes fluid  
56 communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid  
57 chamber of the exhaust valve and opens fluid communication between the actuating  
58 fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve thereby  
59 allowing the exhaust valve to be moved towards its closed position and ii) an opened  
60 position at which the second control valve opens fluid communication between the  
61 actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve and  
62 closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the  
63 actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve thereby allowing the exhaust valve to  
64 be hydraulically moved towards its opened position; and a power piston positioned  
65 in the combustion chamber and operable to move therein between i) an expansion

position at which the combustion chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the combustion chamber reaches its minimum volume; wherein said actuating fluid compressor chamber and actuating fluid storage chamber of each power module are isolated from fluid communication and independently operable with respect to the actuating fluid compressor chamber and actuating fluid storage chamber of any other said power module of the internal combustion engine.

40. The internal combustion engine of claim 39, wherein said actuating fluid compressor cell and combustion cell of each power module are located adjacent to one another.

41. The internal combustion engine of claim 39, wherein said power modules are arranged substantially in-line relative to one another.

42. The internal combustion engine of claim 39, wherein the actuating fluid compressor cells are arranged in an alternating and substantially in-line pattern with respect to the combustion cells.

43. A two-stroke cycle power module, comprising:  
a rotatable crankshaft;  
a combustion chamber;  
an actuating fluid drain passage;  
an actuating fluid common rail adapted to be arranged in fluid communication with a source of pressurized actuating fluid;  
a movable power piston positioned in the combustion chamber and coupled to the crankshaft for movement therewith;  
an electronically-controllable hydraulically-actuatable intake valve having an actuating fluid chamber and a piston portion positioned in the actuating fluid chamber, said intake valve selectively operable to admit air into the combustion chamber;

an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable first control valve arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve, said first control valve selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the first control valve closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve and opens fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve thereby allowing the intake valve to be moved towards its closed position and ii) an opened position at which the first control valve opens fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve and closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the intake valve thereby allowing the intake valve to be hydraulically moved towards its opened position;

an electronically-controllable hydraulically-actuatable exhaust valve having an actuating fluid chamber and a piston portion positioned in the actuating fluid chamber, said exhaust valve selectively operable to vent exhaust gas from the combustion chamber;

an electronically-controllable magnetically-latchable second control valve arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve, said second control valve selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the second control valve closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve and opens fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve thereby allowing the exhaust valve to be moved towards its closed position and ii) an opened position at which the second control valve opens fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve and closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the exhaust valve thereby allowing the exhaust valve to be hydraulically moved towards its opened position

an electronically-controllable hydraulically-actuatable fuel injector

44 extending into the combustion chamber and selectively operable to inject fuel  
45 therein, wherein said injector includes an actuating fluid chamber, a piston portion  
46 positioned in the actuating fluid chamber, a check valve movable between a closed  
47 position at which the check valve blocks injection of fuel and an opened position at  
48 which the check valve opens injection of fuel, and an electronically-controllable  
49 magnetically-latchable third control valve arranged in fluid communication between  
50 the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the injector, said  
51 third control valve selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at  
52 which the third control valve closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid  
53 common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the injector and opens fluid  
54 communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid  
55 chamber of the injector thereby allowing the check valve of the injector to be moved  
56 towards its closed position and ii) an opened position at which the third control  
57 valve opens fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the  
58 actuating fluid chamber of the injector and closes fluid communication between the  
59 actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the injector thereby  
60 allowing the check valve to be hydraulically moved towards its opened position,  
61 wherein said crankshaft is selectively rotatable in one angular direction and a reverse  
62 angular direction in response to selectable timing and sequence of operation of the  
63 intake and exhaust valves and the fuel injector relative to the position of the power  
64 piston.

1 44. A method of operating a two-stroke cycle power module having a  
2 rotatable crankshaft; an air compressor cell defining a variable-volume air  
3 compressor chamber, an air supply port, and an air exit port, said air supply port and  
4 air exit port each arranged in fluid communication with the air compressor chamber,  
5 said air supply port adapted to communicate with a source of supply air; an air  
6 supply valve associated with the air supply port and selectively operable to move  
7 between i) a closed position at which the air supply valve closes the air supply port  
8 and thereby closes fluid communication between the source of supply air and the air  
9 compressor chamber via the air supply port and ii) an opened position at which the  
10 air supply valve opens the air supply port and thereby opens fluid communication



between the source of supply air and the air compressor chamber via the air supply port; an air pump piston positioned in the air compressor chamber and operable to move between i) an expansion position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the air compressor chamber reaches its minimum volume; a combustion cell defining a variable-volume combustion chamber separate from the air compressor chamber, an air intake port, and an exhaust port, said air intake port and exhaust port each arranged in fluid communication with the combustion chamber; an air storage chamber arranged in fluid communication between the air exit port of the air compressor cell and the air intake port of the combustion cell; an intake valve associated with the air intake port of the combustion cell and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the intake valve closes the air intake port and thereby closes fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port and ii) an opened position at which the intake valve opens the air intake port and thereby opens fluid communication between the air storage chamber and the combustion chamber via the air intake port; an exhaust valve associated with the exhaust port of the combustion cell and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the exhaust valve closes the exhaust port and thereby closes fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port and ii) an opened position at which the exhaust valve opens the exhaust port and thereby opens fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port; and a power piston positioned in the combustion chamber and coupled to the crankshaft for movement therewith, said power piston operable to move in the combustion chamber between i) an expansion position at which the combustion chamber reaches its maximum volume corresponding to a  $180^{\circ}$  angular position of the crankshaft and ii) a contraction position at which the combustion chamber reaches its minimum volume corresponding to a  $0^{\circ}$  angular position of the crankshaft, said method comprising the steps of:

moving the power piston from its contraction position and towards its expansion position;

opening the exhaust valve when the power piston has been moved to a first position corresponding to a first angular position of the crankshaft;

opening the intake valve when the power piston has been moved to a second position corresponding to a second angular position of the crankshaft;  
moving the power piston to its expansion position;  
moving the power piston from its expansion position and towards its contraction position;  
closing the exhaust valve when the power piston has been moved to a third position corresponding to a third angular position of the crankshaft;  
closing the intake valve when the power piston has been moved to a fourth position corresponding to a fourth angular position of the crankshaft; and  
moving the power piston to its contraction position.

45. The method of claim 44, wherein the angular distance between the first and fourth angular positions is about 80°.

46. The method of claim 44, wherein the first angular position of the crankshaft is about 140°, the second angular position of the crankshaft is about 160°, the third angular position of the crankshaft is about 200°, and the fourth angular position of the crankshaft is about 220°.

47. The method of claim 44, wherein during operation of the power module the combustion chamber has a peak fluid pressure of about 13,790 kPa (about 2000 psi) when the power piston is at its contraction position.

48. The method of claim 44, wherein during operation of the power module the combustion chamber has a residual fluid pressure greater than atmospheric pressure when the power piston is at its expansion position.

49. The method of claim 48, wherein the residual fluid pressure in the combustion chamber is at least about 138 kPa (about 20 psi).

50. The method of claim 48, wherein the residual fluid pressure in the combustion chamber is in the range of about 138 to 207 kPa (about 20 to 30 psi).

51. A power module, comprising:

an actuating fluid compressor cell defining a variable-volume actuating fluid compressor chamber and an actuating fluid port arranged in fluid communication with the actuating fluid compressor chamber, said actuating fluid port adapted to communicate with a source of actuating fluid;

an actuating fluid drain passage;

an actuating fluid supply valve arranged in fluid communication between the source of actuating fluid and the actuating fluid port and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the supply valve closes fluid communication between the source of actuating fluid and the actuating fluid compressor chamber via the actuating fluid port and ii) an opened position at which the supply valve opens fluid communication between the source of actuating fluid and the actuating fluid compressor chamber via the actuating fluid port;

an actuating fluid pump piston positioned in the actuating fluid compressor chamber and operable to move therein between i) an expansion position at which the actuating fluid compressor chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the actuating fluid compressor chamber reaches its minimum volume;

a combustion cell defining a variable-volume combustion chamber, separate from the actuating fluid compressor chamber, an air intake port, an exhaust port, and an actuating fluid common rail, said air intake port and exhaust port each arranged in fluid communication with the combustion chamber;

an actuating fluid storage chamber arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid port of the actuating fluid compressor cell and the actuating fluid common rail;

an intake valve associated with the air intake port of the combustion cell and operable to move between i) a closed position at which the intake valve closes the air intake port and thereby closes fluid communication to the combustion chamber via the air intake port and ii) an opened position at which the intake valve opens the air

intake port and thereby opens fluid communication to the combustion chamber via the air intake port;

an exhaust valve associated with the exhaust port of the combustion cell and selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the exhaust valve closes the exhaust port and thereby closes fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port and ii) an opened position at which the exhaust valve opens the exhaust port and thereby opens fluid communication between the combustion chamber and the exhaust port; and

an electronically-controllable hydraulically-actuatable fuel injector extending into the combustion chamber and selectively operable to inject fuel therein, said fuel injector including an actuating fluid chamber, a piston portion positioned in the actuating fluid chamber, a check valve movable between a closed position at which the check valve blocks injection of fuel and an opened position at which the check valve opens injection of fuel, and an electronically-controllable fluid control valve arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the injector, said control valve selectively operable to move between i) a closed position at which the control valve closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the injector and opens fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the injector thereby allowing the check valve of the injector to be moved towards its closed position and ii) an opened position at which the control valve opens fluid communication between the actuating fluid common rail and the actuating fluid chamber of the injector and closes fluid communication between the actuating fluid drain passage and the actuating fluid chamber of the injector thereby allowing the check valve to be hydraulically moved towards its opened position; and

a power piston positioned in the combustion chamber and operable to move therein between i) an expansion position at which the combustion chamber reaches its maximum volume and ii) a contraction position at which the combustion chamber reaches its minimum volume.

52. The power module of claim 51, wherein said control valve is

magnetically latchable in at least one of its closed and opened positions.

53. The power module of claim 51, further including a check valve arranged in fluid communication between the actuating fluid port of the actuating fluid compressor cell and the actuating fluid storage chamber, said check valve operable to allow only one-way fluid flow from the actuating fluid compressor chamber to the actuating fluid storage chamber.

54. The power module of claim 51, wherein said actuating fluid supply valve includes a digitally-controlled two-way valve including a movable magnetically-latchable spool having one end portion and an opposite end portion, a closing-direction electrical coil located proximate the one end portion of the spool, and an opening-direction electrical coil located proximate the opposite end portion of the spool, said closing-direction electrical coil selectively operable to electromagnetically pull the spool towards one state corresponding to the closed position of the actuating fluid supply valve, said opening-direction electrical coil selectively operable to electromagnetically pull the spool towards another state corresponding to the opened position of the actuating fluid supply valve.

55. (Amended) The power module of claim 51, further including an electronic control unit operable to control the selectable operation of said electronically-controllable fluid control valve.

56. The power module of claim 55, further including an actuating fluid pressure sensor operable to i) sense the pressure of actuating fluid in the actuating fluid storage chamber and ii) provide the electronic control unit with an actuating fluid pressure signal indicative of said pressure, said electronic control unit operable to independently control the operation of the actuating fluid supply valve in response to said actuating fluid pressure signal.

57. The power module of claim 51, wherein said injector is a multiple stage injector.

3  
1 58. The power module of claim 51, wherein said actuating fluid  
2 storage chamber is integrally formed with the actuating fluid compressor cell.  
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1 59. The power module of claim 51, wherein said actuating fluid storage  
2 chamber is connected to the actuating fluid compressor cell.  
3

1 60. The power module of claim 51, wherein said intake and exhaust  
2 valves each further include a return spring operable to bias the respective valve  
3 towards its closed position.  
4

1 61. The power module of claim 51, wherein the actuating fluid  
2 compressor cell and the combustion cell are integrally formed with one another by a  
3 common housing.  
4

1 62. The power module of claim 51, wherein the actuating fluid  
2 compressor cell and the combustion cell are connected together as a compact unit.  
3

1 63. The power module of claim 51, wherein the actuating fluid pump  
2 piston and the power piston are movable by a common drive device.  
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